

News Release



Office of Communications
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS-330
Arlington, VA 22203
Phone: 703-358-2220; Fax: 703-358-1973
<http://www.fws.gov>

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Contact: Vanessa Kauffman
703-358-2138
vanessa_kauffman@fws.gov

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Seeks Proposals from States for Annual Endangered Species Grants

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking proposals from states and U.S. territories interested in obtaining federal financial assistance to acquire land or conduct planning efforts for endangered species conservation.

The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF) is authorized under Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and provides grants to states and territories to support participation in a wide array of voluntary conservation projects for species on the Federal Lists of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants, as well as for candidate species. For fiscal year (FY) 2013, the President's budget request for the annual Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund includes \$60 million in grant funding for conservation activities benefitting federally protected species.

"These conservation grants are among the Service's most important tools for building strong partnerships for the conservation of threatened and endangered species," said Service Director Dan Ashe. "Local involvement is the cornerstone of conservation success and these grants allow states and territories to protect vital habitat lands and work with local communities and private landowners to conserve listed species for generations to come."

The Service is seeking proposals under the following three CESCF categories:

Recovery Land Acquisition Grants: These grants provide funds for the acquisition of threatened and endangered species habitat in support of approved and draft species recovery plans. Acquiring habitat in order to secure long-term protection is often the critical element in a comprehensive recovery effort for a listed species. Last year, the State of Hawaii was awarded a grant of \$1.2 million to acquire 3,128 acres of sensitive coastal habitat, including more than a mile of coastline, on the southern coast of the island of Hawaii. These beaches are important habitat for hawksbill turtles, green turtles and Hawaiian monk seals. The property is adjacent to the largest natural area reserve in the state and will provide landscape-level protection of the area's unique ecosystems and habitats.

Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants: These grants provide funds to support the development of Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs). The purpose of an HCP is to ensure adequate protection of suitable habitat for threatened and endangered species, while at the same time providing for economic growth and development. Last year, the State of Florida was awarded a grant of \$300,250 to initiate the planning of a county-wide HCP for scrub habitats in Highlands County to benefit the Florida scrub-jay, eastern indigo snake and other dry scrub

species. Implementation of an HCP in Highlands County marks a significant step forward for scrub conservation in the heart of Florida's central ridge, and enhances similar efforts made in neighboring counties.

HCP Land Acquisition Grants: These grants provide funds to states and territories to acquire habitat for threatened and endangered species to complement conservation strategies of approved HCPs. Last year, the State of Washington received \$3.7 million to protect 4,160 acres in southern Asotin County, including four miles of critical bull trout habitat along the Lower Grande Ronde River and three miles of riparian habitat along Cougar Creek. This project complements a larger, landscape-level conservation effort that will protect over 15 miles of streams and 13,000 acres of habitat that support federally listed gray wolf, bull trout, and steelhead as well as multiple unlisted species.

By law, the state or territory must have a current cooperative agreement with the Secretary of the Interior and contribute at least 25 percent of the total project costs, or ten percent when two or more states or territories undertake a joint project. Proposals must be submitted to the appropriate Service regional offices by January 14, 2013.

For more information about these grants and the application requirements contact: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Consultation, HCPs, Recovery, and State Grants, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 420, Arlington, VA 22203, 703-358-2171. The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund is identified in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance as number 15.615.

The ESA provides a critical safety net for America's native fish, wildlife, and plants. The Service is working to actively engage conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species. To learn more about the grants, visit the Endangered Species Program online at: <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/index.html>

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwshq, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>.

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